

It's 'Eagles' vs. 'Leafs' in silver game

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—We'd like to invest in silver while the price is below \$6 an ounce. Would you recommend a U. S. "American Eagle" or the new Canadian "Maple Leaf"? **F. B., Park Ridge**

A—Both bullion coins contain one troy ounce of silver, although some investors say they prefer to buy the Maple Leaf because it has a face value of \$5 (Canadian) compared with just \$1 (U. S.) for the Eagle.

If the price of silver collapses, the Canadian coin would be worth more as "legal tender." At present exchange rates, for example, \$5 Canadian goes for \$4.20 in U. S. currency. However, you might have to go to Canada to spend your hoard because local banks don't normally exchange foreign coins for U. S. money.

Q—A quarter in my 1988 uncirculated coin set is missing the "D" mint mark and Washington has no ribbon in his hair. How many sets like this exist and is there any real value to them?

K. Z., Round Lake Beach

A—Error-coin expert Alan Herbert describes your set as "unusual but not rare," worth perhaps \$11 retail—\$2 more than the going rate for a "normal" 1988 uncirculated set. Most likely, the heads-side die that made your quarter became clogged with dirt or grease from the coin press, preventing part of the design from "striking up."